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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Report of the Secretary-General*

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* The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 54/96 F of 15 December 1999, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution. The report covers developments from 1 July 1999 until 30 June 2000.

2. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consists of the Republics of Serbia (including Central Serbia, Kosovo and Vojvodina) and Montenegro. Owing to the fact that Kosovo is administered by the United Nations, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), the situation in that province is covered in separate paragraphs of the report.

II. Review of major humanitarian developments

3. After 10 years of conflict in the region, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia hosts the largest refugee population in Europe, with over 500,000 from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Since June 1999, as a result of inter-ethnic violence in Kosovo, there has been an additional influx of displaced persons, mainly Serbs and Roma, from Kosovo to the rest of Serbia (about 180,000 currently registered) and Montenegro (about 32,000). Furthermore, given the current economic hardship, humanitarian efforts also focus on socially and economically vulnerable segments of the resident population, whose well-being increasingly depends on external assistance.

4. After the cessation of hostilities in June 1999, the United Nations agencies reinforced their presence in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and, together with non-governmental organization partners, focused on the activities described below.

5. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs initiated a process of evaluating humanitarian risks and vulnerability associated with socio-economic decline and damage to infrastructure. A registration of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and various other assessments, including primary health, food and crops, energy, local communities and environment, were conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), respectively, contributing to sharpening beneficiary identification and developing a platform for planning and advocacy of their needs.

6. Humanitarian agencies, led by UNHCR, assist the displaced populations, with a view to: ensuring that international protection is provided and that their rights are respected; helping refugees and internally displaced persons to find durable solutions; and providing acceptable minimal living conditions to the most vulnerable populations until durable solutions are found.

7. Given the current economic hardship, vulnerable local populations require assistance similar to the displaced. Accordingly, 400,000 social cases receive food aid in Serbia. In Montenegro, 55,000 social cases receive food aid regularly and an additional 27,000 are assisted on an ad hoc basis.

8. With social services at a near collapse, it is critical to support essential institutions. Health support, led by WHO, has focused on basic public health services, while UNICEF supported basic education, including school equipment. In the energy sector, advocacy by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has enhanced domestic measures to stabilize energy supply and facilitated international assistance. Local capacity-building to facilitate transition in education and health has been more intensive in Montenegro than in Serbia.

9. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has enhanced its monitoring, protection, and reporting activities, as well as local capacity-building to protect and promote human rights. UNICEF advocates for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

10. Although a possible crisis was averted during the 1999-2000 winter, there are still significant humanitarian needs that require international attention. For the large displaced populations, renewed focus is now being placed on promoting durable solutions. While the outlook on refugee repatriation has improved following political changes in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, conditions in Kosovo are not yet conducive to large-scale returns of internally displaced persons from that province. Humanitarian needs among social cases are increasing, owing to worsening economic conditions. In Montenegro, humanitarian

efforts are making the transition from relief to promotion of self-reliance, while in Serbia international assistance beyond humanitarian aid is not forthcoming under the current political climate.

11. In Kosovo, the main objective of the United Nations programme during the winter months was to avert the potential for a humanitarian tragedy, as hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians returned to seriously damaged or destroyed homes. This aspect of the programme was largely successful and, while many spent an uncomfortable winter in minimal conditions, only about 6,000 individuals had to avail themselves of the back-up community shelters provided. With the return of the Albanian majority population, the minorities themselves rapidly became the victims of violence and isolation. Humanitarian assistance continues to be provided primarily to these populations in order to ameliorate, to the extent possible, their suffering and prevent further displacement of this segment of the Kosovo population.

III. Review of socio-economic developments

12. The past decade saw general economic and social deterioration in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, resulting in increased social vulnerability. In 1999, the economy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia showed a further, sharp decline, exacerbated by infrastructural damage during the North Atlantic Treaty Organization campaign and the economic sanctions. According to estimates by independent experts, the gross domestic product (GDP) dropped by 32 per cent in 1998-1999 and average real salaries declined by 38 per cent, with some payments in significant arrears. Inflation exceeded 100 per cent, further eroding the purchasing power of average citizens. Unemployment is estimated at 32 per cent, with a significant additional number of people on forced leave.

13. Agriculture has also seen a dramatic decline during the last decade, owing to economic problems, adverse weather, a shortage of fuel for agricultural machines and fertilizers, as well as the lack of modernization due to the sanctions over the past decade. The overall agricultural production dropped by 32.4 per cent between 1991 and 1999. Wheat production dropped from 3 million tons to 2 million tons in 1999, which is almost at the level of national consumption. This downward trend could be exacerbated by flood damage in 2000.

14. Economic decline, coupled with political instability and the influx of over 700,000 displaced persons, significantly decreased the social services capacity in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The healthcare system is in a state of near collapse, as reflected in the drastic decrease in per capita health expenditure (from US$ 200 in 1990 to US$ 40 in 1999). Under the current political climate, health-care reform, though urgently needed, is not forthcoming in the near future.

15. The educational system is also rapidly declining, suffering from poor conditions of schools, old and insufficient equipment and a general lack of teaching aids. The social welfare system, too, is facing serious problems. While the number of social cases is rising, welfare allowances do not satisfy even the basic needs of beneficiaries, thus making the most vulnerable groups dependent on humanitarian assistance.

16. With the trade restrictions imposed on Montenegro in early 2000, the relationship between Serbia and Montenegro continued to deteriorate. Those measures had an additional negative impact on the Montenegrin economy, already grappling with a sharp increase in prices following the introduction of the deutsche mark as legal tender in November 1999. As a result of the blockade, cheap products from Serbia have had to be substituted by more expensive imports, and there is a shortage of some important items, such as specialized medicines. In addition, a shortage of agricultural inputs, which used to come from Serbia, is hampering the production capacity of small-scale farmers.

17. In Kosovo, the stability of the social situation as at mid-year 2000 differs markedly by region. In many areas, social vulnerability is on the decline after the humanitarian interventions of the 1999-2000 winter months. The security situation in some minority communities, however, has led to an exacerbation of social vulnerability in those areas.

18. The scope and quality of social services is gradually improving. Major inputs provided by the international community have resulted in significant improvements in healthcare, education and power and water supply, although much remains to be done before these services become self-sustaining. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is playing an important role in re-establishing and standardizing the "safety net" of social welfare and community services throughout Kosovo.

19. Even before the recent crisis, Kosovo was the poorest province in the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia, with an estimated per capita income of less than US$ 400 per year in 1995 (the last year for which figures are available), and unemployment as high as 70 per cent. Official unemployment is currently around 60 to 80 per cent.

20. Before the crisis, agriculture was the cornerstone of the province's economy, comprising one third of GDP in 1995. It is estimated that more than 50 per cent of agricultural assets were damaged or lost during the first six months of 1999. While agricultural production has now resumed in most areas, the full exploitation of this sector is hampered by the dearth of vital farm implements and machinery, the displacement of previous tenants and owners and the presence or threat of landmines.

21. The industrial and manufacturing sectors of the province, which accounted for about one third of pre-crisis GDP, were heavily damaged during the air strikes. Prospects for their rehabilitation are in doubt, owing to the departure of trained managers and workers, unresolved ownership issues and outdated technology, production methods and environmental protection standards.

IV. Review of human rights developments

22. The human rights crisis within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has deepened as political tensions escalate and elections approach. The majority of the population is now considered to be vulnerable to violations of their basic human rights. Trafficking of persons (women, children and asylum seekers) has increased the number of persons who remain unaccounted for as a result of the regional crisis.

23. In Serbia, there has been massive and increasingly arbitrary detention of opposition and human rights activists, financial investigation of non-governmental organizations and confiscation of their equipment, arrests and criminal prosecutions of journalists and proliferation of internal checkpoints and measures of physical repression by police against persons in custody. Furthermore, there are daily individual arrests of or indictments against community activists (over 600 "Otpor" members from April to June 2000), local political leaders, media and publishing representatives (over 40 in May 2000 alone), and attorneys. Supporters of judicial independence have been relieved of duty or have resigned. Arrests, detention and trials of hundreds of Kosovo Albanians, most dating from 1998, journalists, attorneys and others are carried out in violation of international human rights and domestic due process standards.

24. In Montenegro, where centralized executive authority is tempered by an independent judiciary and a strong legislature, the combination of centralized authority, pervasive police presence and intensive opposition political activity has resulted in no large-scale violations of human rights. Within the framework of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe, the Government of Montenegro has undertaken initiatives to promote the rights of individuals belonging to national minorities and the rights of women. Montenegro has seen a sudden increase in issue-oriented non-governmental organizations. With the education efforts of international organizations and non-governmental organizations, these new groups are developing civil society, challenging centralization of authority and promoting the rights of individuals.

25. In Kosovo, while UNMIK has worked to establish security and order and to begin building local government institutions, progress has been uneven. Ethnic violence has continued to be a grave problem, predominantly involving Albanian attacks on Serbs and other minority groups, but also Serb attacks on Albanians in areas where the latter constitute a minority. Violence within the Kosovo Albanian community against political figures, community leaders and activists has also become worrisome, particularly in view of upcoming municipal elections.

26. The Kosovo Force (KFOR) has attempted to contain the ethnic violence, but with limited effect. UNMIK efforts to address ethnic and criminal violence have been hindered by funding and staffing shortfalls, particularly in the number of United Nations police, and the lack of a functioning impartial judicial system. The inability to establish the rule of law has fed a climate of impunity for ethnic and criminal violence and raised concerns over arrest, detention and other due process issues. The highly sensitive issue of missing persons, detainees and prisoners remains a serious obstacle to the resolution of inter-community tensions. The lack of access by minorities to basic services, including health and education is also a persistent problem.

27. On the positive side, the human rights situation of the majority Kosovo Albanian community has improved significantly since June 1999. Legislative working groups are drafting laws to combat domestic violence and trafficking in women and girls and

UNMIK has established an ombudsman's office offering the population in Kosovo a mechanism to address human rights problems and official abuse.

V. Assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners

A. Coordination arrangements

28. The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (excluding Kosovo) was appointed in August 1999 and, with support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provides overall coordination, including regular agency consultations both in Belgrade and Podgorica. Operational agencies lead sectoral coordination.

29. In Kosovo, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs coordinated humanitarian aid efforts until 30 June 2000, when the UNMIK Humanitarian Pillar led by UNHCR was dissolved. Since then, a Humanitarian Coordinator appointed by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator has carried out this function with support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

30. The Humanitarian Community Information Centre in Pristina, supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNHCR and others, works closely with a wide range of actors to encourage and facilitate information sharing in support of ongoing humanitarian relief, as well as reconstruction and development efforts.

B. Winterization efforts

31. In Serbia and Montenegro, the immediate humanitarian priority was to ensure the well-being of vulnerable populations throughout winter. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs led efforts to mitigate the impact of potential energy shortages on vulnerable groups by taking measures to help prevent the collapse of high-tech infrastructure. The Government of Switzerland donated high-priority spare parts worth SwF 3.25 million to promote grid stability and repair capability. The use of these parts has been closely monitored.

32. The winterization programme of UNHCR included the delivery of heating fuel to refugee collective centres and refugee families, relief items, such as blankets and mattresses, and cash assistance to some 30,000 internally displaced persons and refugees. Assistance from UNICEF included provision of heating fuel to children's institutions and maternity wards, delivery of winter clothing for 10,000 children, and small repairs of heating installations in primary schools. The Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere, Inc. (CARE), with funding from the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), delivered heating oil, coal and generators to essential institutions.

33. A winter energy crisis was averted through significant imports of energy and resources, domestic measures, favourable weather patterns and humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, the underlying fragility of the energy supply in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remains and international support will be needed for the coming winter.

34. In Kosovo, over 120,000 dwellings suffered significant war-time destruction or damage. One of the key humanitarian priorities was quickly to launch a comprehensive emergency shelter programme to assist those in need of accommodation during Kosovo's first post-war winter. UNHCR, in its capacity as head of the UNMIK Humanitarian Pillar, coordinated international efforts to provide emergency shelter for some 700,000 persons, mostly in the form of repairs to damaged family dwellings. As a final option, the Pillar prepared some 20,000 places in temporary community shelters for those people for whom no other solution could be found. Only about 6,000 people — mostly internally displaced persons — used the community shelters, indicating the effectiveness of the emergency shelter programme.

35. In addition, UNHCR, ECHO and the International Organization for Migration supplied firewood, stoves and all-season tents to extremely vulnerable groups, host families and social institutions. Four-month food aid stockpiles were pre-positioned in remote villages to ensure food security during the winter months. Not a single death owing to exposure or hunger was recorded, despite the harsh winter conditions that prevailed.

C. Food aid

36. WFP is the main agency responsible for providing food aid to vulnerable groups and, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and non-governmental organization partners,

assists refugees, internally displaced persons and social cases.

37. WFP food aid targets 337,000 vulnerable refugees in Serbia and 14,700 in Montenegro, from a total of 500,000. In addition, UNHCR provides fresh food to collective centres. UNHCR vegetable gardens and poultry-raising projects benefit over 8,000 refugees in more than 90 collective centres, providing both food and cash income to the refugees.

38. In Serbia, ICRC provides direct food assistance to internally displaced persons. WFP supplements this with complementary food rations. In Montenegro, WFP plays the lead role in coordinating bulk food assistance to internally displaced persons (an average of 47,100 beneficiaries during the second half of 1999) and is responsible for covering 50 per cent of their food requirements.

39. WFP food aid also benefits socially vulnerable groups, primarily the elderly, destitute families and those in social institutions. In Serbia, WFP provides basic food rations to 400,000 beneficiaries. In addition, ICRC assists 100,000 persons through its soup kitchens. In Montenegro, WFP and non-governmental organization partners regularly cover 55,000 beneficiaries.

40. Between July 1999 and April 2000, WFP provided 65,582 metric tons of food aid in Serbia and 8,746 metric tons in Montenegro. The main implementing partner is the Yugoslav Red Cross. About half of the commodities are purchased in the country and delivered directly to the warehouses. WFP is continuing efforts to diversify the distribution channels and about 10 per cent of the food aid is now distributed by international non-governmental organizations. WFP closely monitors distributions and the impact of the food aid.

41. In Kosovo, WFP, in coordination with UNHCR, international non-governmental organizations and local partners, distributed emergency food aid to some 1.36 million people, or approximately 80 per cent of the total population, starting in June 1999. Between that month and May 2000, a total of 190,000 metric tons of food aid was distributed.

42. From the outset, WFP and its partners developed a phase-down strategy, reducing the beneficiary population to 900,000 in September 1999, 600,000 in April 2000 and 300,000 in July 2000. While food aid is phased down in response to economy recovery and favourable crop predictions, the humanitarian community has taken care to ensure that the most vulnerable groups, including minorities and those in hospitals and social institutions, continue to receive basic rations.

43. Starting in June 2000, under the direction of the UNMIK Department of Health and Social Welfare, the local welfare agencies, known as Centres for Social Work, will undertake a new cash-based social assistance scheme in Kosovo. Initially this programme will include a food aid component organized by WFP, UNHCR and UNMIK in collaboration with a variety of international and local partners. Between June 2000 and April 2001, the food aid component will be gradually phased out.

D. Shelter

44. UNHCR provided financial support to the Serbian and Montenegrin Refugee Commissioners for the running costs of collective refugee/internally displaced person centres. Some 43,000 refugees and internally displaced persons live in collective accommodation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Small-scale repairs to collective centres were being carried out through implementing partner agreements. Winter tents (1,000) were procured in 1999 as an emergency reserve.

45. The UNMIK housing reconstruction programme, led by the European Union, seeks to concentrate external assistance on the neediest families, as determined by local housing committees. Up to 20,000 houses will be rebuilt during 2000, in addition to the extensive building activity in the private sector. Temporary community shelters will be maintained as required by UNMIK (for Albanians) and by UNHCR (for minorities).

E. Health

46. WHO coordinates health-related humanitarian assistance and advocates for international support to primary health care and life-saving hospital services. WHO and UNICEF are currently supporting a comprehensive household survey on the health, socio-economic and nutrition status of the population and on health service utilization. Besides the provision of influenza vaccination, essential antibiotics and basic laboratory regents, WHO implements polio eradication and a comprehensive tuberculosis programme, as well as a mental health programme in Montenegro.

47. UNICEF supported the immunization of some 200,000 children up to two years of age, including refugees and internally displaced persons, with

supplies and training. UNICEF also provided essential drug kits to 110 primary health-care centres and 20 hospitals, covering 330,000 children and women for one year, and distributed mattresses to 62 health centres to benefit 100,000 newborn babies and mothers.

48. UNHCR provides medical assistance to those refugees and internally displaced persons who cannot be taken care of through the state health-care system. This includes reimbursement of a portion of the costs incurred by specialized health institutions accommodating refugees, delivery of drugs to particularly vulnerable chronic cases, and, exceptionally, through direct payments for prescriptions.

49. In Kosovo, WHO provides technical support in planning, reform and development to the UNMIK Department of Health and Social Welfare. Because Kosovo's health indicators are the worst in Europe, WHO is leading the process of reform from the existing centralized and specialist-oriented system towards a comprehensive, horizontal and sustainable primary care approach. In addition to its advisory role, WHO implements programmes focused on capacity-building and coordination of non-governmental organizations and donors.

50. Along with UNICEF, numerous international non-governmental organizations provide direct support to the health sector. Direct interventions by international agencies are increasingly focused on minority areas and remote rural locations.

51. Since December 1999, UNFPA has undertaken projects in demography, reproductive health and advocacy, including the provision of equipment and training to the maternity sections of health houses and hospitals.

F. Water and sanitation

52. Humanitarian assistance in this sector focuses on the rehabilitation and upgrading of water supply and sewage systems in refugee/internally displaced person collective centres and private accommodations, carried out by non-governmental organization partners. Furthermore, in order to help improve the quality of drinking water, UNICEF has provided the Serbian Institute of Public Health with equipment for monitoring water-related diseases among children. UNICEF also assisted in small repairs of water systems and installation of water-purification equipment following the floods in the summer of 1999.

53. In Kosovo, assistance in the water sector has focused on emergency supply of water and repair of basic infrastructure. In rural areas, WHO, in cooperation with the Institute of Public Health and non-governmental organizations, has adopted a more comprehensive approach, including public education on hygiene. UNMIK authorized water companies to begin charging for water supplies in May 2000.

54. There are no treatment facilities for raw sewage in Kosovo and the urban sewerage network is old and in need of urgent rehabilitation. To date, most assistance has focused on urban areas, in the form of emergency repairs of sewer pipes and septic tanks. In urban areas, this work is beginning to be taken over by municipal authorities.

G. Education and child welfare

55. UNICEF activities in education aim at supporting the dilapidated educational system. Basic educational material and textbooks were provided for displaced children and children at social risk, while assistance was provided for the emergency rehabilitation of 40 schools in Central Serbia and the provision of basic classroom supplies. Catch-up classes were initiated for an estimated 30,000 displaced children and non-formal education facilitated for displaced and minority children. New approaches in teaching and learning methods, as well as education for development, including education for peace and tolerance and constructive conflict resolution, have been strongly promoted.

56. UNICEF has strengthened social sector services through the training of social welfare professionals working with vulnerable families, including teachers, police, medical doctors and legislative professionals, with special focus on internally displaced children and women. Psychosocial workshops for both children and parents have been organized, and training programmes for psychologists and care providers implemented.

57. In Kosovo, humanitarian organizations have focused on reactivating education and normalizing life for all children. Around three million textbooks have been printed in Albanian and minority languages. Hundreds of schools have been repaired and provided with new furniture, equipment and supplies. Teachers have been trained in recognizing signs of trauma and in basic psychosocial support techniques.

58. In order to address the needs of children under the age of seven, UNICEF, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, has put emphasis on the creation of pre-school facilities, especially in rural areas and for disadvantaged minorities, such as Askalija and Roma. As a result, 110 playrooms have been opened. Numerous youth centres have also been rehabilitated. Focus has also been placed on developing appropriate policies on foster families, international adoption and institutionalization of children.

H. Agriculture

59. No agricultural assistance programme was implemented by FAO in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia outside Kosovo in 1999, and few non-governmental organizations are presently active in that sector. A FAO mission was fielded to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in April 2000 to review emergency needs in the agricultural sector in relation to the impact of the Kosovo crisis. The mission concluded that the food supply situation, particularly wheat, could deteriorate and affect the most vulnerable groups, including poor small farmers. FAO has prepared project proposals for emergency assistance, targeting vulnerable farmers, refugees and internally displaced persons. They include distribution of agricultural inputs, support to home garden production, a FAO/WFP Crop and food supply assessment mission to forecast agricultural output and monitor the food security situation and technical assistance.

60. The agricultural assistance programme in Kosovo, coordinated by FAO, is aimed at restoring rural livelihoods and the self-reliance of rural communities through the provision of inputs and technical assistance. FAO coordinated the emergency winter wheat assistance programme of non-governmental organizations in autumn 1999 and provided technical assistance, monitored the food security situation and carried out a province-wide livestock vaccination campaign.

61. The 2000 agricultural assistance programme will benefit some 70,000 vulnerable farming families through the distribution of basic seeds and fertilizer, the repair of farm machinery, the establishment of a forestry service and a wheat and potato seed multiplication programme. Simultaneously, FAO will target technical assistance to rural groups exhibiting a high propensity for entrepreneurial activity.

I. Promotion of durable solutions

62. A major focus of international humanitarian efforts in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is to seek durable solutions for the large displaced populations by promoting repatriation and resettlement and, as needed, local integration.

63. Repatriation continues to be the preferred solution for refugees. UNHCR assists the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatian Governments in implementing the Protocol on Organized Return by organizing the return of groups of refugees. Several non-governmental organizations implementing specific return projects with regard to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina will be supported throughout 2000. Particular attention will be given to public information activities promoting the repatriation of refugees to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

64. As regards protection, UNHCR, in cooperation with implementing partners, operates a legal counselling network for refugees, which also serves internally displaced persons. Cross-border contacts between legal counselling offices in the countries of the region are being promoted. UNHCR also supports the offices of the Commission for Real Property Claims, set up under the Dayton Agreement. A re-registration of refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is planned for late 2000. Resettlement activities are being carried out for a limited number (4,000 in 2000) of refugees per year in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration. The situation of IDPs in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is closely monitored, including the Roma population, which is a potentially vulnerable group among the internally displaced population.

65. Projects for the local integration of refugees include permanent shelter and various skills training and income generating activities. In 1997, a programme was started to construct permanent houses for refugees opting to remain as citizens in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At the end of 2000, it is expected that some 6,000 refugees will have benefited from this programme, part of which is self-help. Throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, income-generating programmes are carried out targeting those refugees wishing to integrate into the local community and become self-reliant.

66. In Kosovo, efforts are being made to stabilize the situation of vulnerable populations at risk of displacement. Regular monitoring and reporting missions visit vulnerable communities across the

province to identify their policing, security and food-aid needs. Special attention is paid to isolated communities, primarily ethnic Serb and Roma, but also the ethnic Albanian minority living in the North Mitrovica region. Eight UNHCR-supported legal aid and information centres provide counselling on a wide range of legal issues. Mobile teams also visit isolated minority communities. Apart from promoting equal and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance and to public utilities, such as telephones and electricity, the teams provide security devices, satellite phone service and evacuations. UNHCR also operates bus services to allow some degree of freedom of movement for the members of isolated Serbian communities.

67. Financial support is provided to enable eight local Councils for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms to conduct returnee monitoring, document human rights violations and provide human rights awareness training. UNHCR chairs the weekly Ad Hoc Task Force on Minorities, which brings together personnel from KFOR, the UNMIK Police and other agencies to examine the situation facing minority communities and seek solutions to their problems.

68. UNICEF and UNHCR have assisted communities throughout Kosovo in establishing centres for children of all ethnic groups to address psychosocial needs and encourage reintegration and community reconciliation.

69. The UNHCR Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI) extends support to one of the most vulnerable returnee groups, namely, women. KWI assists well-established local women's non-governmental organizations and encourages new initiatives at the grass-roots level, by providing funds and technical support for reproductive health and income-generation projects, counselling services, vocational training and classes in various subjects. KWI projects also reach out to women in minority communities, who are particularly vulnerable. Already over 115 local women's non-governmental organizations and other local groups have received funding while additional proposals are being assessed.

70. In addition to the measures in favour of vulnerable populations within Kosovo, a Joint Committee on Returns has been established to facilitate the return to Kosovo of displaced populations.

J. Environmental damage

71. The UNEP/United Nations Centre for Human Settlements Balkans Task Force (BTF), established in May 1999, published a report in November 1999, "The Kosovo Conflict — Consequences for the Environment and the Human Settlements". It concluded that pollution detected at four environmental "hot spots" (Pancevo, Kragujevac, Novi Sad and Bor) poses a threat to human health and should be addressed as part of humanitarian assistance. In early 2000, BTF conducted feasibility studies and established emergency projects for immediate clean-up at these sites, for which UNEP, with the United Nations Office for Project Services, is entering the implementation stage. UNEP, together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, assessed the cyanide spill at Baia Mare in Romania in February 2000, concluding that the public water supply system in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not adversely affected.

K. Mine action

72. UNICEF continued mine and unexploded ordnance awareness programmes in schools in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

73. In Kosovo, the UNMIK Mine Action Coordination Centre has been established as the focal point of all mine action activities and currently coordinates the work of 16 accredited mine-clearance organizations and 12 mine-awareness organizations. The Centre has established a database of mine information and prioritized 2000 "dangerous areas" for clearance. A total of 360 square kilometres is known or suspected to contain mines or NATO cluster bombs. The Centre estimates that these areas can be cleared in three years. A total of 472 casualties, including 98 deaths, have occurred through mine/unexploded ordnance accidents since June 1999. Approximately 50 per cent of the deaths can be attributed to NATO cluster bombs.

Clearance achievements to date (as at 9 July 2000)

Area cleared (square metres)	Houses	Schools	Cluster bomb units	Anti-personnel mines	Anti-tank mines	Unexploded ordnance
10 765 125	**16 131**	**776**	**4 337**	**3 155**	**3 411**	**4 040**

L. Human rights

74. Active human rights protection and promotion is integral to humanitarian efforts in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights concentrates on respect for the rule of law, administration of justice, protection of detained persons, inter alia, against torture and ill treatment, the rights of individuals belonging to national minorities and promotion of freedom of expression and association. In the field, it intervenes on site against arbitrary detention.

75. Capacity-building, including support for community groups and non-governmental organizations engaged in rights education and protection, is a major activity of many United Nations organizations, particularly UNHCR and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. UNHCR advocacy and protection of the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons include legal service clinics and special efforts to protect the right to return of national minorities. UNICEF has increased monitoring activities and support for local capacity to protect and promote children's rights. ICRC exercises its mandate on behalf of detainees, visiting prisons and giving support to families of missing persons, and recently issued a compendium of tracing reports related to the crisis in Kosovo. The network of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) reaches throughout the region and promotes dialogue among national and international non-governmental organizations and United Nations organizations.

76. In Kosovo, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights chairs the Commission on Prisoners and Detainees and provides valuable information on and facilitates the release of Kosovo Albanian detainees from Serbian prisons. On rule of law issues, the Office has been monitoring the trials of individuals accused of war and ethnic hatred crimes and visiting courts and detention centres to assess the treatment of detainees and compliance with due process standards.

77. In June 2000, ICRC published its Book of the Missing, listing 3,368 missing persons whose names have been provided by families from all communities in Kosovo from January 1998 to mid-May 2000.

VI. Assistance provided by Member States

78. Funding for humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is mobilized through the United Nations Consolidated Appeal for South-eastern Europe. Of the US$ 122.6 million requested for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 1999 appeal, $106.8 million was received, covering 87 per cent of the requirements. For Kosovo-related programmes, $631.2 million was donated against a request for $679.0 million, representing a 93 per cent response rate.

79. In the 2000 consolidated appeal, of the $199.2 million requested for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, $13.6 million had been received as at 30 June 2000. By the same date, of the $249.6 million requested for Kosovo, $67.5 million had been donated. In addition, many Member States provided assistance outside the framework of the consolidated appeal, through non-governmental organizations, regional organizations and initiatives and bilateral assistance. Further information on funding of humanitarian programmes, including donations by individual Member States, can be obtained through the web site www.reliefweb.int.

VII. Concluding observations

80. Humanitarian efforts in Serbia and Montenegro are carried out against a background of political complexities. Given Serbia's international isolation, including sanctions, assistance there has been limited

to humanitarian aid. Montenegro is shifting to transitional initiatives, for which the international community has deepened its support, including direct bilateral aid in the form of budgetary support and technical assistance for institutional reform. In both republics, the absence of international developmental actors places constraints on efforts to ensure effective links between relief, recovery and development — a key to long-term peace and stability in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and indeed in the region. Similarly, the continuing exclusion of Serbia from regional peace and reconstruction efforts is of concern.

81. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is expected to face significant, and even increasing, humanitarian challenges for the foreseeable future. For Serbia, the immediate future is likely to be characterized by continued deterioration of the economy, leading to an increase in the vulnerable caseload, reduced coping mechanisms and further deterioration of public services. In Montenegro, it is unlikely that the Government will be able to take over the responsibility for all humanitarian caseloads in the near future. International support will continue to be needed for delivery of assistance, protection, advocacy and assessment of needs, so that the humanitarian requirements of both the displaced and social cases can be consistently addressed.

82. Efforts are being made to better target the most vulnerable groups, particularly in view of the increasing number of social cases. Relief aid to refugees may be further prioritized and scaled back as the focus shifts more towards promoting durable solutions. Relief aid to Kosovo internally displaced persons needs to be maintained, as the prospect for their return to Kosovo is still uncertain.

83. Attention is also being paid to developing a strategy of gradual phase-out from relief towards longer-term transitional assistance. However, in both Serbia and Montenegro, effective transition will require political stability, respect for basic human rights and durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons. Until those conditions are achieved, relief assistance will be necessary.

84. The political environment in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and indeed in all of south-eastern Europe, is volatile and requires close monitoring of its impact on the humanitarian situation. Humanitarian agencies, therefore, need to maintain sufficient emergency response capacity throughout the region.

85. The international humanitarian community in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is concerned about the politicization of humanitarian aid. The provision of humanitarian assistance should be based on the needs of the most vulnerable groups, without political conditionality. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as elsewhere, aid commodities, such as food, fuel, medicines and basic educational resources should not be used as a means to promote political objectives. The international community is urged to renew its commitment to humanitarian principles and maintain a clear distinction between programmes that are humanitarian and those that are not.

86. The international community has scored impressive achievements in Kosovo, assisting the return and reintegration of hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians who had fled their homes, averting a humanitarian crisis during the winter and re-establishing basic public services. UNMIK and its local partners in the interim administration have assumed increasing responsibility for the coordination and provision of essential services, particularly in the fields of health, social welfare, education and housing reconstruction. In the future, the challenge will be to generate internal sources of funding for these services, while decreasing reliance on the international donor community.

87. As UNMIK takes over basic public services, the remaining assistance programmes of international humanitarian agencies are expected to focus on protection and the provision of goods and services to minority populations. However, the phasing out of general humanitarian assistance could be reversed if housing reconstruction efforts are not completed before the winter, or if large-scale forced returns of Kosovars from host countries place significant new burdens on the fragile network of existing social services.

88. The goal of promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups in Kosovo has so far proven elusive. As a result, members of minority groups continue to leave the province and those outside are reluctant to return. The return of all such displaced persons must remain a top priority. At the same time, it must be recognized that it may take many years to overcome the bitter resentment and mistrust engendered by recent events in Kosovo. This will

require a sustained and determined effort by all concerned, not least the people of Kosovo themselves.

89. The United Nations remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Until the underlying political and economic problems can be resolved, the Organization will continue its efforts to address the urgent needs of the affected populations.